

would find each other's people back home if anything happened to either of us. It ended up that he was killed . . . I tried to find his people when I came back home, but I never could find them."

The toil of war eventually took a toll on Led as well. During a battle, "a shell went off close to me, and it did something to my ears," Led says. "My face was numb . . . they loaded me into an ambulance and took me to the 106 Hospital in Naples, Italy." After that, Led spent time recovering in a rest camp and was taken out of combat and was assigned to a port battalion where he loaded and unloaded supplies.

After the war, Led received many medals and ribbons, including the Bronze Star for his service. Once he returned home to Kentucky, Led began a career as a coal-truck driver—he is also an ordained minister in his spare time. Around his 70th birthday, Led fell in love with Lois Neal, a girl he had known from his childhood. The two have been married now for over 18 years and reside happily together in their home in Pine Knot, KY.

I would like to ask that my Senate colleagues join me in thanking Mr. Ledford "Led" Stephens for his patriotism and selflessness. I commend Ledford for his service and accomplishments throughout his life—he is a true inspiration to Kentuckians everywhere. The McCreary County Voice in Whitley City, KY, recently published an article highlighting Ledford's honorable life and service. I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the McCreary County Voice, Aug. 11, 2011]

MEMORIES OF A SOLDIER

(By Eugenia Jones)

As a youngster, growing up across the creek from Lower Cal Hill Cemetery, Ledford "Led" Stephens never dreamed that he would someday travel to distant lands to serve his country. The American war veteran, who just recently celebrated his 90th birthday, has vivid memories of his time spent in World War II.

He recalls, "When I was 18, I registered for the Army. Next thing I knew, I got a call to go in and get two physicals. I passed the first physical they gave me at Stearns, and then I had to go all the way to Cincinnati for the second one. When I was there in Cincinnati, they told us to say, 'Home' if we wanted to go back home for fourteen days. Me and a buddy wanted to go back home for two weeks. After we got those days at home, I caught a train at the station at Stearns to go back to the Army. There were many people at the station, and they were crying as we headed off for the war. I ended up at Fort Thomas where they issued my clothes. I went on to Fort Wheeler, Georgia, for basic training and then to Camp New Jersey. A buddy of mine from home was there with me. He had his guitar, and one night, he started picking a song about going back home. All at once, he told me that he wanted to go home, but I told him that they would kill us if we took off. They issued us our impregnated clothes there. Those types of clothes protect

the soldiers from gas. We just knew that being issued those clothes meant that we were going overseas for sure."

The hunch about going overseas was correct, and Stephens can still remember leaving the U.S. "From New Jersey, I went to New York where we loaded a ship and sailed for fourteen days and nights. We ended up in Casablanca, North Africa. We spent a couple of weeks there and were put in the 3rd Division. Right about that same time, there was a surrender, and I thought we might get to go home. Instead, we ended up in the Invasion of Sicily. I was the first scout in the town of Messina, Sicily, and, from there, I went on to the Invasion of Italy. We went in there on a beach and fought our way up. I met a fellow from Frazer, Kentucky, and we both promised that we would find each other's people back home if anything happened to either of us. It ended up that he was killed. I was a 30-caliber machine gunner, and he was an assistant with another gunner. That is how he was killed. I tried to find his people when I came back home, but I never could find them."

The war eventually took a physical toll on Stephens. He explains, "The Germans came in shelling us. A shell went off close to me, and it did something to my ears. My face was numb. They wanted me to wait to go to the hospital until the 36th Division could relieve us. When I did go to the medics, they were in a long hospital tent. A fellow looked at me and loaded me into an ambulance. They took me to the 106 Hospital in Naples, Italy. After that, I went to a rest camp and some other hospitals. I ended up being taken out of combat and was assigned to a port battalion where I loaded and unloaded supplies."

Stephens did have some fun times while he was overseas. His face lights up with a grin as he tells about the two girls he met while in Europe. "While I was there in Italy, I was sent to a rest camp. I could go to town whenever I wanted. Me and a buddy met two girls in town one day. We went for a ride with them, and I started seeing the girl named Connie quite regularly. I went for a time without seeing her and decided I would go to her house and find her. I went up the stairs and knocked on the door, and an old woman came to the door. She spoke English and said, 'Stephens, come in!' The old woman was Connie's mom. She and Connie were glad to see me. When we shipped out, Connie wanted to go. I went back later to see her, and, this time, there she was! She was locked in the arms of a sailor! Of course, that was the end of our friendship!"

"I met Esther when I was in France. When I first saw her, she was crocheting, and she spoke English. Her sister's name was Julie, and I told my buddy about Julie. The Germans had taken their parents. One day, me and my buddy went and visited. Julie's boyfriend came while we were there. Julie was dating a boy named Scott from Tennessee. She was seeing Scott and my buddy both at the same time. When I left France, I told Esther that someday I would be back for her. When I got back to the States, I planned to go back overseas, but Mrs. Harmon of the draft board thought I should wait awhile. I had already been overseas for thirty months and ten days. I ended up never going back overseas, and I never saw Esther again."

After returning to the States, Stephens, the recipient of many medals and ribbons, including the Bronze Star, spent his life working as a coal-truck driver and, for a few years, he worked in Indiana. At the age of 62, he began working for the Forest Service where he remained for more than three years. Stephens also was an ordained minister.

In his golden years, when he was about 70, Stephens fell in love with Lois Neal. Lois,

who, for many years, owned and operated a grocery store at the top of Davis Hill in Pine Knot, recalls, "When Led started coming to the store, he came regularly!" "Led" adds with a chuckle, "I enjoyed helping her in the store. It sure wasn't the store that I was after. It was Lois! I had my eye on her, and, then, she sent me some roses! We had known each other when we were growing up. Before I went overseas, I remember taking her for a ride in a Model A. I was singing, I'm Sitting on Top of the World' when we went for that ride." The two have now been married for 18 years.

When "Led" finishes telling the stories about his days in WW II, it is easy to see that this man who traveled the world serving his country as a young man is now happy to be "sitting on top of the world" with his lovely wife Lois at their home in Pine Knot, Kentucky.

VETERANS DAY

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I rise to speak on an important holiday we will recognize later this week. Veterans Day is a time we have set aside to pause and remember the veterans who have sacrificed so much for our country. We honor them for their courage and dedication in helping secure our freedom. It is without saying that we are all indebted to these men and women and we celebrate them and their selfless service on behalf of every American.

Last month the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month came to a close, but as Veterans Day nears, I believe that it is timely and fitting to call attention to the contributions of the American Latinos who have served in every major war of the United States and continue to be an invaluable part of America's military.

Approximately 1.3 million of America's current 22.7 million veterans are of Hispanic origin. In Colorado, each of these veterans deserves our recognition and continued support. Due to the sacrifice of so many from our state, such as Medal of Honor recipient Joe P. Martinez, who was laid to rest in 1943 in Ault, CO, our country has been made stronger.

Other veterans, such as Albert Gonzales, a Colorado Springs resident who currently serves as the national commander of the American G.I. Forum and was recently appointed by President Obama as a member of the National Selective Service Appeal Board, demonstrate the ongoing commitments of Colorado's veterans. Albert represents another example of the thousands of exemplary Coloradan Hispanic veterans.

In Colorado, paying tribute to the State's Hispanic veterans is a strong part of our effort to support all veterans. In the small southeastern Colorado agricultural town of Avondale, which has come to call itself the "Pueblito of Heroes," it has become an annual tradition to recognize the many veterans who have served from this small community. Just this year, they honored long-time resident Eutimio Sandoval who received a Bronze Star,

Korean Service Medal, Japan Service Medal and a 50th anniversary medal for his service.

Many humble men and women who have served in our military are celebrated in communities across Colorado, and I wish to join them to express my appreciation and highlight the contributions of servicemembers of all backgrounds that make up the larger family of veterans who have given so much.

This November 11, I encourage everyone to take the time to thank a veteran and servicemember for his or her involvement in protecting America and the principles for which we stand.

TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT THOMAS R. GDOVIN

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, on this week of Veteran's Day, I rise today to recognize SGT Thomas R. Gdovin, of Cleveland, OH, for the exceptional bravery he displayed in combat on March 8, 1968, in Vietnam while assigned to the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division. Earlier today I presented the Silver Star, one of our Nation's highest honors for gallantry in military service, to former SGT Thomas Gdovin here in Washington, DC.

SGT Thomas R. Gdovin enlisted into the U.S. Army on July 5, 1966, and served in the 101st Airborne Division. Today, during a ceremony over 40 years in the making, he received the Silver Star for his bravery during the Vietnam war when he risked his own life to save a wounded soldier during combat. I was honored to have Mr. Dan Phillips, the soldier rescued, attend the ceremony alongside Mr. Gdovin's family and friends in celebration of this well deserved honor.

I am honored to read the Silver Star Citation detailing Sergeant Gdovin's brave actions into the RECORD.

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, 9 July 1918, has awarded the Silver Star to: Sergeant Thomas R. Gdovin, 502d Infantry Regiment, 2d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) For Gallantry: in action on 8 March 1968, while serving as Squad Leader with 1st Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 502d Infantry Regiment, 2d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) in support of operations in the Republic of Vietnam. Sergeant Gdovin's squad became the company's lead element during an attack on enemy forces when they received intense automatic weapons and rocket fire. The lead Soldier in the formation was severely wounded and was unable to move in an area open to enemy fire. Sergeant Gdovin placed the squad into defensive positions and suppressed enemy fire. He then left the defensive position and with complete disregard for his own personal safety and advanced across open terrain toward the wounded soldier, exposing himself to intense enemy fire. Sergeant Gdovin then reached the wounded soldier and under continued fire, brought him back to safety of the squad's position, where we was further evacuated. Sergeant Gdovin's actions are in keeping with the finest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) and the United States Army.

This is truly an exceptional story and I was honored to play a small role in recognizing Sergeant Gdovin. This ceremony was an opportunity to say thank you to all veterans. We can never forget that they gave their time, risked their health, and even placed their lives on the line. This not only means honoring their sacrifices, but also honoring our promises and commitments to them as well. Let us ensure that we honor and remember all our veterans, not just this week but throughout the days and years to come. Their commitment to this Nation is a shining example to all of us.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DR. PETER STANG

• Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I wish to formally congratulate Dr. Peter Stang of the University of Utah for being awarded the National Medal of Science, the highest honor bestowed by the United States upon scientists.

Dr. Stang has been a pioneer in his field, developing methods of creating molecular nano-devices that construct themselves from combinations of chemical building blocks. These devices hold the promise of eventually being used in many revolutionary ways, from enabling artificial photosynthesis to delivering medicine directly to specific individual cells in the human body.

In 1957, Dr. Stang's family fled to the United States from Hungary to escape the violent clashes between Hungarians and the Soviet Union. The greatness of the American spirit is reflected in the fact that this young immigrant became one of the nation's top scientists and is now being recognized by the leader of the free world.

I thank Dr. Stang for his tremendous efforts to improve our way of life.●

TRANSCONTINENTAL OVERLAND TELEGRAPH LINE

• Mr. LEE. Mr. President, on October 24, the Sons of Utah Pioneers celebrated the 150th anniversary of the final connecting of the Transcontinental Overland Telegraph Line in Salt Lake City, establishing the first coast-to-coast electronic communications system in American history.

Much like the Transcontinental Railroad revolutionized transportation in this country, the Transcontinental Telegraph Line revolutionized communication. Sending messages from Washington, DC to California, which had previously taken weeks, took mere seconds after completion of the line.

President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Brigham Young sent the first message to President Abraham Lincoln, which confirmed that Utah was still loyal to the United States and not allied with the Confederacy. The line is credited with helping to ensure that most of the

West sided with the Union in the Civil War.

Congratulations to the citizens of Utah for marking the anniversary of an accomplishment that helped to hold this country together.●

ST. GEORGE, UTAH

• Mr. LEE. Mr. President, 150 years ago, 309 families founded the city of St. George in southern Utah. It would become the main city in a region known as "Utah's Dixie" because of the cotton farms that were established in response to the cotton shortage of the Civil War.

To celebrate this important milestone, several hundred people participated in a reenactment of the 100-mile journey of the original settlers, from the city of Parowan to the eventual location of St. George. The trek featured wagons, livestock, and many other aspects of life in the 19th century.

Today, St. George is a city of over 70,000 people, and is the seat of Washington County. Congratulations to Mayor Dan McArthur and the people of St. George for reaching the 150-year milestone.●

TRIBUTE TO EDIE DAHLSTEN

• Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, you have heard me speak many times about the importance of agriculture to my home State. It is a critical industry in Kansas and forms the backbone of our economy. Within the field of agriculture are many dedicated and talented leaders who serve and have served Kansans with distinction. I have had the privilege to know and work with many of them over the years, but there is one in particular I would like to highlight today. Edie Dahlsten currently serves as the vice president of the Kansas Farm Bureau. For nearly a decade, Edie has served in this role with distinction and this November she will retire at the end of her term.

The Farm Bureau is truly a grass-roots organization that begins with a single farmer, who joins together with his neighbors to form an organization that represents their way of life. Edie and Larry Dahlsten have been engaged in every aspect of that organization, beginning with their service on the McPherson County Farm Bureau Board near their home in central Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, for Edie and Larry, farming is more than just a way to make a living it is a way of life. Together they make a great team, and their commitment to the Farm Bureau and the values it represents is widely known. Edie and Larry's leadership and service together began more than 20 years ago when they served on the State Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee. As an Outstanding Young Farm Family, they have represented their fellow producers on numerous committees over the years to advocate on behalf of producers at the local, State, and national level.

Edie's leadership and advocacy began with humble beginnings on the soil of a